

INFO FOR EDUCATORS

A newsletter for school personnel published by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services

PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

Spring 2007
Volume 1, Issue 3

About this Newsletter

Info For Educators is published by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services as part of an effort to strengthen the ability of child welfare and school professionals to work together on behalf of children and families.

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On December 4th, 2006 DSS and the Massachusetts Administrators for Special Education (ASE) held our fifth joint professional development day in two and a half years. These forums continue to be an invaluable opportunity for child welfare and education professionals to discuss better ways of working together, both through systems innovations as well as local partnerships. Through the EOHHS-Schools Initiative, described in the Spring, 2006 newsletter, EOHHS agencies and school districts are exploring new ways for schools and mental health-human services to collaborate locally and regionally on behalf of the Commonwealth's distressed youth. The Casey Family Programs Education Breakthrough Series is a more local initiative between DSS and the Haverhill Public Schools. Over the course of the next 12 months, the Haverhill DSS Office and the Haverhill Public Schools will identify and test specific ways to improve educational continuity and school stability for children in out-of-home care. Our hope is to identify some new practice models that can be scaled up and out across the Commonwealth in other communities.

These partnerships to sustain our shared commitment to children's educational success set the context for many of DSS' reform efforts, including

the implementation of *Family Networks*. Through *Family Networks*, the Department has made significant real investments in our capacity to support children's success in both regular and special education in public schools. We've increased to 29 the number of education coordinators working with our Area Offices. Our new congregate care models are designed to better support children's connection to their community and schools.

As with any large scale implementation, there are numerous questions about the translation of design into operations. This newsletter attempts to provide some answers to many of the questions that we have recently received. Some questions point out areas where we were not as clear as we needed to be. Other questions require answers that are reminders of established policies and explanations of their application to the new program models. All of them tell us that we must communicate continually with our schools partners. We hope that you will share this newsletter with your colleagues and look to future newsletters for more information about our work. For background information about *Family Networks*, please see the Fall 05 and Spring 06 Newsletters at <http://www.mass.gov/dss>

UPDATE ON FAMILY NETWORKS

FAMILY NETWORKS EDUCATION COORDINATORS

Family Networks includes funding for 29 education coordinators – one for each of DSS' Area Offices. These positions are funded as part of the Area Lead Agency and Regional Resource Center contracts because meeting children's educational needs is critical to supporting them in permanent family/community settings as well as supporting the successful return of children to their community. Education Coordinators work, on behalf of DSS, with school officials on school enrollment issues and may be called upon to advocate for children who experience academic and/or discipline problems in schools. They work closely with school districts as well as parents or other special educational decision makers to ensure that children who are eligible for special education are identified and receive educational services that meet their needs in the least restrictive setting. When DSS and Area Lead Agencies are considering out-of-home placement or are returning a child to his/ her community from residential placement, Education Coordinators help to involve the child's school district in order to develop services and strategies to support educational continuity.

FAMILY NETWORKS EDUCATION COORDINATORS

WESTERN REGION

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Leeanne Yinger
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Holyoke Area Office

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Robert Van Wart Center/ Springfield

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Springfield Area Office

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CENTRAL REGION

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TBD, – Wayside Youth &
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METRO REGION

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SOUTHEAST REGION

Attleboro Area Office

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BOSTON REGION

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FAMILY NETWORKS STARR PROGRAMS

Q: What are Stabilization, Assessment, and Rapid Reintegration (STARR) Programs?

A: The STARR program model redesigns and replaces shelters, bridge homes, and residential diagnostic programs. STARR is a short-term placement service that provides a single door for children who need short-term services for a range of needs, including stabilization only, assessment, and/or respite. Services are focused on supporting a rapid reintegration into the community or transition to a next placement. DSS increased the capacity for short-term placements statewide and tried to locate programs locally to help keep children connected to their communities and to minimize disruption to their lives. Children placed in a STARR program are expected to attend public school in the community while they are in the STARR Program. [Please see list of STARR programs on page 3. For more information, please contact your local DSS Area Office.]

Q: Are the children placed in STARR eligible for benefits under McKinney-Vento?

A: Yes, children placed in STARR programs are eligible for benefits available under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act because the programs provide temporary, transitional, or emergency housing. STARR Programs are expected to collaborate with schools, DSS, educational decision-makers, and the Area Lead Agencies to ensure that each child has access to the benefits provided by this Act, as appropriate. Programs will be guided by DOE's Homeless Education Advisories 2004-9 and 2007- 9A which address the rights of children and youth in state care or custody. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mv>

Q: What is the anticipated length of stay in a STARR program?

A: The STARR program model anticipates a 14 to 45 day length of stay. Upon discharge from STARR, children and youth will either return home or be placed in another DSS placement, such as a group or foster home, and thus, will no longer be considered homeless for the purposes of McKinney-Vento. However, there may be occasions when DSS is unable to reunify the child with his family or make another appropriate placement within 45 days. DSS anticipates that stays longer than 45 days will be the exception, not the rule. If it is necessary for the child to remain in the STARR program beyond 45 days, the child will continue to be considered homeless. STARR programs work closely with DSS, the Area Lead Agency, and the Regional Resource Center to identify and remove barriers to services that result in stays beyond 45 days.

Q: Which school would a child placed in a STARR program attend? Who decides where to enroll? What is the basis for that decision?

A: In accordance with the child's best interest, the child could continue to be educated in his/her school of origin (i.e., the school the child attended, or was enrolled in, before entering the STARR program) or be enrolled in the school district in which the STARR is located. The decision-making participants and process are the same as they were prior to the implementation of STARR, based on the guidance provided in the *Homeless*

Education Advisory 2004-9 and the *Homeless Education Advisory 2007-9A –Addendum* which specifically reference the STARR Programs.

Q: Who is responsible for transportation?

A: Under McKinney-Vento, school districts, not the STARR Programs, are responsible for arranging and providing transportation. STARR Programs will work with the school districts to ensure that enrollment is not delayed while transportation is being arranged.

Q: Are there any circumstances under which a child would not attend the local public school?

A: Yes, there are limited exceptions to the general rule that children will leave the STARR Program to attend school. They include: the child has a short term illness (less than 14 days); a medical doctor has determined that the child cannot attend school and must remain at home for 14 days or more for medical reasons; or there are compelling safety concerns.

Q: Who determines whether the safety concerns are sufficient enough to warrant not enrolling a child in the public school?

A: Through its work with the child and family, DSS staff would identify circumstances that might suggest that the child's safety would be threatened if the child left the STARR program in order to attend school. In these cases, the DSS worker, supervisor, area program manager, the child's family, if appropriate, and the STARR provider discuss the child's clinical history. If they believe that the child should remain in the STARR because the child's safety is threatened, they present this recommendation, including the relevant facts and rationale, to the Area Director. The Area Director will make the final decision on whether the child will remain at the shelter for educational services. DSS expects that these situations will be very rare.

Q: How are children's educational needs met when they are not enrolled in the public school?

A: The STARR programs are responsible for informing the child's responsible school district of the decision to keep a child in the program for safety reasons. The STARR program will request information and assistance from schools in crafting a program to meet the child's educational needs on an interim basis that will result in academic credit. STARR contracts include a limited amount of funding to pay teachers to tutor children in STARR programs so that they will make progress and not lose academic credit as a result of efforts to keep them safe.

Q: What happens when a child moves from a STARR program to a longer-term Group Home or BTR placement within the provider's same physical site?

A: DSS and its Area Lead Agencies will inform the school of origin as well as the school the child is attending (if different) about this move. In general, the child is likely to attend school in the town in which the Group Home or BTR is located. DSS recognizes that this causes a change in the child's educational setting and experience and weighs this carefully when making decisions about the best placement location for a child.

FAMILY NETWORKS STARR PROGRAMS

Provider	Model Name	Service Delivery Site	Age	Gender
BOSTON REGION				
Brandon Residential Treatment Ctr.		27 Winter Street, Natick, MA 01760	Adolescent	M
Caritas St. Mary's Wom. & Child. Ct		90 Cushing Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02125	Latency	M / F
Eliot Community Human Services	Susan B. Anthony House	159 Allston Street, Medford, MA 02155	Adolescent	F
Eliot Community Human Services	Langston Hughes House	281 Hyde Park Avenue, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130	Adolescent	M
Germaine Lawrence Inc.		18 Claremont, Arlington MA 02474	Adolescent	F
Italian Home		1125 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130	Latency	M
Wayside Youth & Family Support Services	Esperanza	558 Waverly Oaks Road, Waltham MA 02154	Adolescent	F
SOUTHEAST REGION				
Community Care Services, Inc.		543 Newport Avenue, Attleboro, MA 02703	Adolescent	M / F
Community Care Services, Inc.		543 Newport Avenue, Attleboro, MA 02703	Adolescent	M / F
Old Colony Y	Transition House	917r Montello Street, Brockton, MA 02301	Adolescent	M / F
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corp.		137 Rum Pond Road, Hyannis, MA 02601	Adolescent	M / F
KEY Program	Stafford Place	62 County Street, Fall River, MA 02723	Adolescent	M / F
St. Vincent's Home Corp.		2425 Highland Avenue, Fall River, MA 02720	Latency	M / F
Eliot Community Human Services		163 County Street, New Bedford, MA 02740	Latency	M / F
Old Colony Y		199 N Main Street Fall River MA 02720	Adolescent	M / F
Bay State Community Services	Plymouth STARR	475 State Road, Plymouth, MA 02360	Adolescent	M / F
Italian Home	Cranwood	9 Pinewood Court, East Freetown, MA 02717	Latency	M / F
NORTHEAST REGION				
Team Co-ordinating Agency		4 South Kimball Road, Bradford, MA. 01830	Adolescent	F
Team Co-ordinating Agency		20 Newcomb Street Haverhill, MA 01830	Adolescent	M
Eliot Community Human Services		12 Orchard Street Lynn , MA 01905	Latency	M / F
Health and Education Service (HES)	ACCESS STARR	6 Echo Avenue, 3rd floor, Beverly, MA 01915	Adolescent	M / F
KEY Program		175 Lowell Street Methuen , MA 01844	Adolescent	M / F
Health and Education Service (HES)		8-10 Howard Street Haverhill, MA 01830	Latency	M/F
Harbor Schools		100 West Main Street Merrimack MA 01860	Adolescent	M / F
Eliot Community Human Services		12 Orchard Street Lynn , MA 01905	Latency	M / F
Serving People in Need (SPIN)	Lynn Academy	50-52 Newhall Street Lynn, MA 01902	Adolescent	M / F
METRO REGION				
Bay State Community Services	Survival	911 Main Street, S. Weymouth MA 02190	Adolescent	M / F
Brandon Residential Treatment Ctr.		27 Winter Street, Natick MA 01760	Adolescent	M
Eliot Community Human Services		130 Dale, Waltham MA 02154	Latency	M / F
Eliot Community Human Services		20 Harvey, Dedham MA 02026	Latency	M / F
Eliot Community Human Services		734 Massachusetts Avenue Arlington MA 02474	Adolescent	M
Eliot Community Human Services		18 Lafayette Street Wakefield MA 01880	Adolescent	F
Germaine Lawrence Inc.		19 Claremont, Arlington MA 02474	Adolescent	F
Northeastern Family Institute	CIP	23 Maple Street, Arlington MA 02474	Adolescent	M / F
The Home for Little Wanderers, Inc.	Longview	399 Lincoln, Walpole MA 02081	Adolescent	M
Wayside Youth & Family Support Services		98 Dennison Avenue, Framingham MA 01701	Adolescent	M
Wayside Youth & Family Support Services		85 Edgell Road Framingham MA 01701	Adolescent	F
Wayside Youth & Family Support Services	Esperanza	558 Waverly Oaks Road, Waltham MA 02154	Adolescent	F
Team Co-ordinating Agency	Milestones	82 High Street Wilmington MA 01887	Adolescent	M
CENTRAL REGION				
KEY Program	Worcester STARR	2-4 Norton Street, Worcester MA 01605	Adolescent	F
LUK Crisis Center	Crossroads Program	102 Day Street, Fitchburg MA 01420	16.5 to 20 years old	M / F
LUK Crisis Center	Horizon House	27 Myrtle Street, Fitchburg MA 01420	Adolescent	M / F
LUK Crisis Center	Bridge Home	101 South Street, Fitchburg MA 01420	Latency	M / F
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corp.	Lancaster STARR	Old Common Road, Lancaster MA 10523	Adolescent	M / F
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corp.	Lancaster STARR	Old Common Road, Lancaster MA 10523	Latency	M / F
Youth Opportunities Upheld (YOU, Inc)	Bridge STARR	1 Elmwood Place, Boylston MA 01505	Adolescent	M
Youth Opportunities Upheld (YOU, Inc)	Bridge STARR	37 Boylston Street, Worcester MA10605	Latency	M / F
WESTERN REGION				
KEY Program		369 West Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201	Adolescent & Latency	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center		107-109 Conway Street, Greenfield, MA 01301	Adolescent & Latency	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center		27-29 Canby Street, Holyoke, MA 01040	Adolescent	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center	Maple STARR	353 Maple Street, Springfield, MA 01108	Adolescent	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center	Mooreland STARR	25-27 Mooreland Street, Springfield MA 01105	Latency	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center		27-29 Canby Street, Holyoke, MA 01040	Adolescent	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center	Mooreland STARR	25-27 Mooreland Street, Springfield MA 01105	Latency	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center	Maple STARR	353 Maple Street, Springfield, MA 01108	Adolescent	M / F
Gandara Mental Health Center	Mooreland STARR	25-27 Mooreland Street, Springfield MA 01105	Latency	M / F

Family Networks BTR Programs

Q: What is a BTR?

A: BTRs – or Behavioral Treatment Residences – are campus or community-based models that can provide staff secure treatment for children with serious emotional, developmental, cognitive and behavioral disorders who do not require an educational placement in an on-site school. These programs are designed to support the education of these children in a community school. Many, but not all, of these children will be eligible for special education services.

Q: How is a BTR different from a Group Home?

A: Group Homes are designed for latency aged or adolescent children who have sufficiently internalized controls to be safe in a less staff intensive setting, and may progress to limited unsupervised time in the community. They may require medication to assist them with emotional/ behavioral issues but have been stabilized on their medication and are generally compliant about taking them. These children are distinguished from children in foster care in that they often cannot tolerate the intimacy of a family setting, or require a higher level of supervision and intensive clinical treatment than can reasonably be provided in a family setting.

Q: Where do children placed in a Group Home or BTR attend school?

A: In general, Group Homes and BTRs provide care for children who will be attending school in the local community. Programs are expected to work closely with the school in supporting children's attendance and educational progress and in assuring that they receive the educational supports they may need and have a right to receive. This work is particularly important for those children who may be at risk of exclusion from public schools due to challenging behaviors.

FAMILY NETWORKS BTR PROGRAMS & SITES

Provider Agency

Italian Home for Children
Italian Home for Children
Bridge of Central Mass
Bridge of Central Mass
Devereux Foundation
LUK Crisis Center Inc
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corps, Inc
Robert F. Kennedy Action Corps, Inc
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Seven Hills Clinical Associates
Youth Opportunities Upheld Inc
Youth Opportunities Upheld Inc
Brandon Residential Treatment Ctr.
Brandon Residential Treatment Ctr.
Brandon Residential Treatment Ctr.
Germaine Lawrence Inc.
Walker Home
Wayside Youth & Family Support Netw
Wayside Youth & Family Support Netw
Wayside Youth & Family Support Netw
Wayside Youth & Family Support Netw
Health and Education Services
Health and Education Services
St. Ann's Home
St. Ann's Home
St. Ann's Home
Team Coordinating Agency Inc
Team Coordinating Agency Inc
Team Coordinating Agency Inc
Team Coordinating Agency Inc
Community Care Services, Inc.
Fall River Deaconess Home
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
Key Program Inc.
St Vincent's Home Inc
St Vincent's Home Inc
St Vincent's Home Inc
St Vincent's Home Inc
Center for Human Development
Gandara Mental Health Center Inc.
Gandara Mental Health Center Inc.
The Children's Study Home

Program Name

Cranwood
Ives House
School House Residence

Cedar House
White Street BTR
Lancaster BTR

The Village
Oxford House

Cornerstones Ipswich
Nexus House

Milestone
Crossroads
Pathways
Phoenix East

Parkwood
KIT
Arnold Ave
Chestnut

Allen Street
Belmont
Female Support Program
Sharp 1

Site Address

1125 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, Boston MA 02130
5 Palmer Court, East Freeland MA 02717
154 Vernon Street, Worcester, MA 01610
41 Randolph Road, Worcester, MA 01606
60 Miles Road, Rutland, MA 01543
846 Westminster Hill Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420
87 White Street, Springfield, MA 01108
220 Old Common Road, Lancaster, MA 01523
308 West Street, Lunenburg, MA 01462
280 Hill Street, Leominster, MA 01453
1204 Broadway Street, Haverhill, MA 01832
168 Richmond Avenue, Worcester, MA 01602
76 Glen Street, Malden, MA 02148
91 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609
149 Pepper Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420
129 Blackstone River Road, Worcester MA 01607
15 Pleasant Street Rochdale, MA 01542
27 Winter Street, Natick MA 01760
10 Fama Road, Ashland MA 01760
4 Nancy Road, Natick MA 01760
18 Claremont Avenue, Arlington MA 02746
1968 Central Avenue, Needham MA 02192
85 Edgehill Road, Framingham MA 01702
98 Dennison Avenue, Framingham MA 01701
512 Sudbury Street, Marlboro MA 01752
558 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham MA 02453
35 Mitchell Road, Ipswich, MA 01938
6 Echo Avenue, Beverly, MA 01915
100A Haverhill Street, Methuen, MA 01844
285 Broadway Methuen, MA 01844
595 Haverhill Street Lawrence, MA 01840
82 High Street Wilmington, MA 01887
31 South Kimball Street Bradford, MA 01835
4 South Kimball Street Bradford, MA 01835
20 Newcomb Street Haverhill, MA 01830
30 Luscomb Road, Taunton MA 02780
878 Rock Street, Fall River MA 02722
20 Parkwood Street, Springfield 01077
786 Wilbraham Road, Springfield MA 01109
156 Arnold Avenue, Springfield, MA 01109
832 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01107
104 Lincoln Street, Worcester MA 01605
102 Charge Pond Road, Wareham, MA 02571
19 1/2 Mystic Street, Methuen, MA 01844
139 Shelburne Road, Greenfield, MA 01302
484 West Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201
2425 Highland Avenue, Fall River MA 02720
365 Haskell Street, Fall River MA 02720
1200 Church Street, New Bedford MA 02740
297 Driftwood, Fall River, MA 02720
1566 Allen Street, Springfield MA 01008
762 Belmont Avenue, Springfield MA 01104
210 Oak Street, Holyoke MA 01040
111 Old Acre Road, Springfield MA 01109